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Face to Face: Solitude, Other, Responsibility

Summary

The term *solitude* is difficult to understand because we are surrounded by things, we see other people and we are in different relations with them. According to Emmanuel Levinas, solitude, as a sign of being, expresses the impossibility of conveying a private existence to another person. Solitude characterizes the continuity of internal *par excellence* relations between the personal being and existence. Solitude is the fact of being of those who have existence; therefore, the question concerning the escape of solitude is an ontological event, which is related to verification of the connection between being and existence. The escape of solitude is possible by means of transcendental power alone. The objective of metaphysical desire is invisible, and, in relation to mortals, it has the feature of absoluteness. This invisibility, according to Levinas, is the expression of our relation with what is not given and is unknown to us. So solitude has not to be understood in the sense of Robinson's loneliness or impossibility to express the content of consciousness. Therefore, social relations find themselves outside the realm of ontology and this fact proves that solitude is included into existence's fact of being. Solitude is necessary for the beginning of a subject's freedom, as well as for the mastering of his existence. Solitude itself is important as a means to show the relation of a subject with *the other*.

The concept of sociality Levinas explicates through the relation between time and *otherness*, underlying the significance of fatherhood in relation to the *other*. *The other* comes to Levinas' philosophy from the existential perception of *I* as well as from the actions of *I*. The emergence of the other is firstly his/her real face. The face of *the other* is not seen but heard – the face escaping from the trap of *visuality queries consciousness, the face speaks* and appeals to the speech. The speech becomes as important to the speakers as it, by means of the address, the imperative, or the vocative, expands the immediate dimensions of the interpersonal relations where the ethical aspect remains clear and serves both and as justice, and as responsibility. In the encounter with *the other*, the speech changes its own conventions. The revealing function of the speech is not a neutral relation between different individuals until the beginning of any thematization, because the very nodus of dialogue exists in the service to *the other*. Such a query of the face is not an absolute realization, because *the other* is never totally reflected in the consciousness of man.

The other is seen as an emerging and entrenching individual possessing his/her own social – cultural ground and his/her own significance which is conditionally independent of this meaning gained from

the world. It must be admitted that through the communication *the other* comes to us not only from the context but manifests his/her presence himself/herself, by means of his/her existence and presence. Thus, the presence of *the other* individual *is moving towards us, entering* us with all one's cultural heritage. The emergence of *the other* individual as a phenomenon is already an image, a self-reflection, *the expression of something wider and speechless*.

Therefore, the relation's *face to face* point expresses in *I* sovereignty rejection. Such disinterested relation with *other* bears a social solidarity and forms the responsibility to each other.